(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) to (d) The sphere of ENT has not been ignored or neglected in the country. Government has taken necessary steps to create awareness among people about ENT related ailments like deafness and its prevention. One of the awareness programmes, which the Government of India has funded, is the programme on Prevention of Deafness and Hearing Impairment at the All India Institute of Speech and Hearing, Mysore. As part of this project, the Institute has conducted public education through print and electronic media in various languages, undertook several screening programmes for various groups for identification of ENT related problems; conducted counseling and administered surgical and medical treatment of ENT problems. Indian Council of Medical Research has also been involved in conducting important research in the ENT area for proper identification and intervention for primary prevention of the problem.

Subsidised India AIDS drugs to control AIDS

3516. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether highly subsidized India AIDS drugs are being used by Nigeria to control AIDS; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the programme proposed to provide similar subsidized drugs in the country to help poor patients especially in rural areas through international aid as well as co-operation of manufacturing firms like Cipla and Ranbaxy?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) and (b) The Indian Pharmaceutical Companies like M/s Ranbaxy and M/s Cipla have negotiations with the Government of Nigeria for supply of three anti-retroviral drugs namely Lamivudine, Stavudine and Nevirapine to the Federal Ministry of Health, Nigeria. Based on the information received from M/s Cipla India, consignments for supply of anti-retroviral drugs namely Lamivudine, Stavudine and Nevirapine have been despatched to Ministry of Health, Nigeria.

The Government at present provides financial support to States/UTs for the treatment of opportunistic infections in all public sector hospitals. But,

anti- retroviral therapies are not supported by the Government in the programme because of their prohibitive costs on account of indefinite period of treatment and other supportive investigations required for monitoring the progress of the disease. However, Government has been progressively reducing the excise and customs duties on anti-retroviral drugs to make them available to HIV/AIDS patients at reasonable price.

Two-tier fee regime for new medical colleges

3517. SHRI C.O. POULOSE: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether as a step towards privatization of medical colleges, Government have adopted two-tier fee regime for new medical colleges;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether meritless students can also be given non-subsidized seats in medical colleges; and

(d) if so, whether this will bring down the standard of future medical practitioners in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) to (c) The admission process in all private medical colleges was spelt out by the Hon'ble Supreme Court Judgement in Unnikrishnan's case, according to which at least 50% of the seats in private medical colleges are to be given on merit basis. The remaining 50% seats are filled in payment category. 15% of seats of total intake capacity of the college are carved out from the payment category to be filled up by the Management under NRI/Management quota. The upper ceilings of fee structure for merit and payment seats are fixed by the Central Government. The actual fee fixation in the colleges is done by respective State Governments. Admissions against 85% seats, which include free and payment category, are required to be filled by the competent authority of the State Government through Common Entrance Examination or otherwise. In both the categories the admission is merit based.

(d) Each and every student admitted to the medical college is required to fulfil eligibility criteria and has to undergo the full prescribed period of study, pass professional examination and undergo internship etc. The standard of future medical practitioners cannot, therefore, come down.